

HARPSWELL *BULLETIN*

News for Harpswell Residents & Property Owners from the Town Office – May '08

Town Web Site: www.harpswell.maine.gov

March 2008 Town Meeting Summary

Harpswell Town Meeting voters approved a municipal budget of \$4,141,283 representing a 3.75% increase in appropriations from the prior year. In addition, they approved two bonding articles—one in the amount of \$500,000 for the purchase of emergency services vehicles, the other in the amount of \$40,000 for communications equipment to be placed on the communications tower once it is constructed. New budgetary items included funding for the purchase of a utility vehicle for the Town, a part-time coordinator of youth recreation programs, the filming of public meetings, a municipally-managed heating assistance program and a one-time contribution toward playground equipment at Harpswell Islands School. Voters opted to increase the elected Town Treasurer's salary from \$6,000 to \$10,000 and to defeat a \$10,000 request to appropriate funds for a wind study on Town-owned property at Long Reach Mountain. The authorized use of \$160,000 from State Municipal Revenue Sharing, \$1,670,000 from non-property tax revenue, \$255,000 of undesignated fund balance and an estimated \$51,000 reimbursement from the State for the homestead exemption, will leave \$2,005,283 to be collected from property taxes for the funding of municipal services exclusive of the county tax and the school budget. With regard to ordinances, the proposed amendments to promote cluster development in subdivisions and to create a 40-foot buffer along State Aid roads were defeated; however, amendments to the Sign Ordinance, Harbor and Waterfront Ordinance, and Floodplain Ordinance were all approved. In elections, Mark E. Wallace was elected Selectman for a three-year term and David A. Johnson and Jane B. Meisenbach were re-elected to the M.S.A.D. # 75 Board of Directors for three-year terms.

Voting on School Budget, June 7 and 10

Due to changes enacted by the Maine Legislature, there will be a two-step process to school budget adoption—a district budget meeting and a referendum. On Saturday, June 7, 2:00 p.m., there will be a School District Budget Meeting in the Orion Performing Arts Center in Topsham. Voters from the four participating towns will convene to adopt a school budget. At this meeting each warrant article will be explained and voted on. The District will also explain what spending is being recommended for local contributions above and beyond the State's Essential Programs and Services (EPS) amount. At the conclusion of the meeting, voters will approve a total budget amount that will be the basis for the District Budget Validation Referendum Election to be held on Tuesday, June 10, 2008 concurrent with the State Primary and Referendum Election. Voting will be held at three regular polling sites from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Harpswell Neck voters will vote at Merriconeag Grange, Orr's/Bailey Island voters at the Old Orr's Island School House and Great Island voters at the Cundy's Harbor Community Building. Questions regarding absentee balloting should be directed to the Town Clerk.

Annual Non-Resident Taxpayer Meeting

The Annual Non-resident Taxpayer Meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, July 8, 6:30 p.m., at Harpswell Islands School.

Harpswell's New Town Planner

Carol Tukey joined the Town's staff in late 2007 as Town Planner. A Maine native who received a master's degree from the Muskie School at the University of Southern Maine, she has amassed planning experience in both Maine and Pennsylvania. Most recently Carol served as Assistant Planner for the Town of Topsham. In her short time onboard, Carol has taken an active role in staffing the various planning committees of the Town and has participated in regional planning efforts such as the Governor's Advisory Council regarding "issues outside the fence" at BNAS, the Midcoast Council of Business Development and Planning, and the New Meadows River Watershed Project. She has also met on several occasions with representatives of the re-constituted Harpswell Business Association.

Planning Initiatives

- **Water & Septic Study** – Ransom Environmental of Portland, Maine was hired to provide professional consulting and engineering services for identifying and assessing water and septic conditions within the Town. Not only will there be an update of data sources, but a model will be developed that will demonstrate the carrying capacity of the land based primarily on soil characteristics. This information will assist the Town in its land use planning efforts. Ransom Environmental will also analyze the use of road salt for winter maintenance and make recommendations with regard to its use and application.
- **Open Space Plan** – The Harpswell Conservation Commission (HCC) has been working on the Open Space Plan with assistance from Fred Dillon of FB Environmental and more recently with assistance from Marcel Polak, the Conservation Resources Advisor for the Maine Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC). The MACC selected Harpswell and several other communities as recipients of its no-cost assistance. In Harpswell's case, the assistance is specifically targeted toward completion of the Open Space Plan. With these consultants, the HCC has begun to decide the methodology for prioritizing conservation efforts for the remaining open spaces within the Town. It is the Commission's intent that the draft plan will be available for review by the Townspeople in early June.
- **Comprehensive Plan Implementation Services** – Selectmen have chosen Beth Della Valle and Judy Colby George as consultants to assist the Town and its Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC) with further analysis and explanation of the growth and land use patterns section of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. Data, including that obtained from the updated Water and Septic Study, will form the basis for creating a scientific methodology to determine areas potentially suitable for growth as well as areas less suitable for growth. In addition, recommendations developed from the Open Space Planning process will guide the work of the CPIC in its exploration, understanding and communication of proposed ordinance changes for the Town's future consideration.

New Committees

By action of the Selectmen several new committees and a task force have been established. The adopted mission statements are as follows:

- The ***Emergency Vehicles Committee*** consisting of fire department representatives and elected officials shall be responsible for making recommendations to the full Board of Selectmen regarding the purchase of emergency vehicles by the Town. The Committee shall ensure that specifications are developed and where appropriate there is consistency among the departments in regards to types of vehicles purchased and in the equipment to be included in the vehicle purchase, considering individual department needs. Final approval of the specifications shall rest with the Selectmen.
- The ***Governance Committee*** shall be responsible for exploring ordinances or policies that help the three-member Board of Selectmen function predictably, effectively and ethically including developing strategies for improving the functioning of Town Meeting as well as for soliciting public feedback. Recommendations should be developed that enhance the operations of Harpswell's current government configuration of a three-member Board of Selectmen which is subject to the determinations of the voters as expressed at town meetings. The Committee should review other municipalities for sample ordinances, policies or other related documents. The Committee shall not deal with exploring a change in the current form of town government, except for the matter of appointing rather than electing the Treasurer, Road Commissioner, Town Clerk and Tax Collector. In addition, the Committee shall review the current Recall of Elected Officials Ordinance and develop a policy with regard to items voted on by secret ballot.
- The ***Mitchell Field Implementation Committee (MFIC)*** shall work on developing recommendations and strategies that lead to the implementation of the Mitchell Field Master Plan. Such recommendations and strategies shall be provided to the Board of Selectmen for consideration, and may include short- as well as long-term planning initiatives. The Committee shall work with the Town Planner to secure additional adequate grant monies to complete a detailed strategic implementation program. This strategic implementation program should include at a minimum: 1) a physical condition and cost assessment for pier reconstruction based upon public discussion and recommendations for pier reconstruction and reuse; 2) a physical condition and assessment of existing water and septic infrastructure and cost estimates for all improvements necessary to complete the marine business, recreation and housing components of the Master Plan. MFIC shall seek input on housing, recreation, conservation and marine business implementation strategies from existing town committees and from other available resources as coordinated through Town staff.
- The ***Energy Task Force*** shall recommend energy policies to the Selectmen that reduce energy consumption in the Town of Harpswell by encouraging energy conservation and promoting efforts to increase energy self-sufficiency for the community. The Task Force shall provide leadership and direction for local energy conservation education; shall research the possibility of securing funding for local energy project(s); shall coordinate through Town staff with other local, regional and state organizations and shall serve other purposes related to energy as specified by the Selectmen. The task force shall undertake research and make recommendations in areas that may include but not be limited to solar and wind power; tidal, geothermal and other forms of power generation; energy audits; energy conservation; and any other activities that will make the municipality more energy self-sufficient through conservation measures, the use of renewable energy resources and/or the use of clean (non-fossil fuel) sources.

Pipeline Removal Update

Fay, Spofford & Thorndike (FST) of Burlington, Massachusetts has been contracted to develop construction bid documents for the removal and disposal of approximately 8 miles of underground fuel pipe within the existing pipeline easement. FST has sub-consultant agreements with a survey firm, Surveying and Mapping Consultants (SMC) of Braintree, Massachusetts, to accomplish topographic survey of the site, and also with an environmental firm, Normandeau Associates, Inc. (NAI) of Falmouth, Maine, for environmental permitting. Survey operations began on or about April 15 and entail survey crews establishing approximately 30 targets throughout the project area to facilitate aerial mapping. Vernal pool and wetlands delineation by Normandeau Associates will begin shortly. Upon completion of the topographic survey and wetlands delineation which should take approximately 6 weeks, FST will prepare base mapping and begin the design for pipeline removal. Normandeau Associates will prepare the necessary documentation and file applications for permitting with Maine DEP.

Memorial Day Observances

Annual Memorial Day observances will take place Monday, May 26 beginning at 10:00 a.m. with a wreath ceremony at the Ewing Narrows Bridge. The parade is scheduled for 11:00 a.m. starting at the intersection of Allen Point Road and Route 123, then proceeding to the Old Town Meeting House at Harpswell Center for a ceremony presided over by Memorial Day organizer, Shirley Thompson. Observances include two guest speakers, recitation of the Gettysburg Address and musical selections. Take time to honor and remember of those who served this country, especially those who lost their lives doing so. Also plan to visit the Old Town Meeting House and the Harpswell Historical Building and Archives which will be open to the public.

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*Resident
Bailey Island, ME 04003*

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Orr's Island, ME 04066*

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